

# Lounger's Miscellany.

## NUMBER XI.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9th, 1788.

*Et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen.*

VIRG. ECL. v. l. 42.

*And raise a tomb, and on that tomb inscribe.*

Dr. TRAPP.

IT is a circumstance much to be lamented, that some agreement has not been entered into by the learned, to curb the licentious state of sepulchral poetry. Epitaphs were originally intended to perpetuate the memory of the just, and to convey instruction to the rising progeny through the medium of example; for nothing can advance us nearer to perfection, than copying the actions of those who have most excelled. As this custom became more general, its good intentions were perverted, and vice, concealed in the shroud of flattery, was misplaced in the tomb of virtue.

WHAT seems to render this species of writing defective is — the difficulty of ascribing “a particular and appropriate praise:” the writer is either a friend or a hireling, who either not knowing the rudiments of the art, or wilfully misconceiving them, speaks of virtues that never existed; from such, little is to be expected but intrusive panegyric.

EVERY church-yard affords ample proof of the necessity of checking the progress of this vice, which is so flagrant as to furnish

twelve lies to one truth, and deprives a good man of his dues, by mingling him with the herd of finners. Even the simple stone that informs us of the uncertainty of life (which is a needless piece of information) and barely nominates the man that "was born in "one year and died in another," carries not with it half the intillity and absurdity. Very few specimens of correctly written epitaphs can be produced, for even Pope, who for flowing numbers could not be surpassed, has been fairly censured by Dr. Johnson; so that it were better to drop the jingle of ineffectual rhyme, and replace it with more sententious prose.

IN order to give my readers some idea of the general run of monumental inscriptions, I shall quote two or three of different sorts, and just slightly mention their defects and deviations from the original design, with a view of damping the ardor of posthumous encomiasts. To begin then with a perfect one:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY  
OF THE REVEREND ROBERT MARKHAM, D. D.  
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY GEO. III.  
AND RECTOR OF THIS PARISH,  
WHO DIED SEPT. 25, 1786, AGED 59 YEARS.  
IN TESTIMONY OF THE  
HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH THEY HELD HIS CHARACTER,  
AS A ZEALOUS PASTOR OF A NUMEROUS FLOCK,  
AS AN EARNEST AND ORTHODOX PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL,  
AS A TRULY PIOUS AND BENEVOLENT MAN,  
AS A PEACE MAKER, AND A SPIRITUAL FATHER AND FRIEND,  
HIS PARISHIONERS  
HAVE ERECTED THIS MONUMENT.



WHEN such characters as these are set up as subjects of imitation we feel our own insignificance: but what heart is there so practically frigid as to be contented with mere verbal inspection, and deny to the deceased and his friend, the praises their respective merits claim!

THE epitaph which follows is so little adapted to the silence of a church, that the most serious reader would be inclined to burst out into a laugh at the puns and witticisms of its author:

St.

## ST. FAITH'S, under ST. PAUL'S.

" William Lambe, so sometime was my name,  
 " Whiles I alyve did run my mortal race ;  
 " Servynge a prince of most immortal fame,  
 " Henry the Eighth, who of his princely grace  
 " In his chappell allowed me a place.  
 " By whose favour from gentleman t'esquire  
 " I was prefer'd with worship for my hire.  
 " With wives three I joyned wedlock band,  
 " Which all alive true lovers were to mee,  
 " Joane, Alice, and Joane, for so they came to hand ;  
 " What needeth praise regarding their degree ?  
 " In wively truth none steadfast more could be,  
 " Who tho' in earth death's force did once sever,  
 " Heaven yet, I trust, shall joyne us all together.  
 " O Lambe of God, which sinne didst take away,  
 " And as a Lambe was offered up for sinne,  
 " Where I, poor Lambe ! went from thy flock astray,  
 " Yet thou, good Lord, vouchsafe thy Lambe to winne  
 " Home to thy fold, and holde thy Lambe therein ;  
 " That at the day when Lambes and Goats shall sever,  
 " Of thy choice Lambes Lambe may be one for ever."

## WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

" Thomas Parr, of the County of Salop, born anno 1483. He lived in the reigns  
 " of ten princes ; viz. King Edward IV. King Edward V. King Richard III.  
 " King Henry VII. King Henry VIII. King Edward VI. Queen Mary, Queen  
 " Elizabeth, King James, and King Charles ; aged 152, and was buried here  
 " November 15, 1635.

HERE no comment is requisite : rigid temperance will ever find  
a herald in longevity.

CHRISTIANITY and its eternal blessings cannot be more happily exhibited than in the laconic inscription on a tomb in the Col-  
latine way, at Rome :

" *Dis Manibus*  
 Sexti Perpennæ Firmi :  
*Vixi quemadmodum volui :*  
*Quare mortuus sum nescio."*

## IN ENGLISH:

"To the Gods Manes of Sextus Perpenna Firmus.

"I liv'd as I lik'd; but why I died I know not." —

Alas, poor Firmus!

ALTHOUGH the following epitaph does not contribute to the improvement of the reader, yet this imperfection will be pardoned for the historic fact which it records:

## IN MOLIERUM.

"Roseius hic situs est tristi Molierus in urna,

"Cui genus humantum ludere, ludus erat.

"Dum ludit mortem, mors indignata jocantem.

"Corripit, et nimium fingere sæva negat."

## IMITATED.

"Within this melancholy tomb confin'd,

"Here lies the matchless ape of human kind;

"Who while he labour'd with ambitious strife

"To mimic death, as he had mimick'd life.

"So well, or rather ill, perform'd his part,

"That Death, delighted with his wondrous art,

"Snatch'd up the copy, to the grief of France,

"And made it an original at once."

It is an undoubted fact, that while Moliere was personating a dead man on the stage, he was taken ill, and died in a few hours.

## St. BENNET'S, PAUL'S WHARF, LONDON.

"Here lies one More, and no More than he.

"One More, and no More! how can that be?

"Why one More, and no More may well lie here alone:

"But here lies one More, and that's More than one."

SUCH vile doggrell as this ill deserves admission in a church! Had we our choice, we should choose no more.

So many of the favors we receive in this world are conferred on us through a selfish motive in the bestower, that too much censure cannot





cannot be heaped on those who are guilty of so base a practice. On a tomb-stone in Yorkshire we find a mason using the death of his friend as a conveyance of his own professional advertisement :

" Here lies the body of poor Frank Row,  
 " Parish Clerk, and Grave-stone Cutter.  
 " And this is writ to let you know,  
 " What Frank for others us'd to do,  
 " Is now for Frank done by another."

1706.

A — — fecit.

THE name of such a friend is purposely obliterated.

AFTER so many varieties of epitaphs one would think there were no more varieties remaining, but the reader will be much surprised to find a few yet untouched. The first of these may be called the depreciating: — that which robs a man of fame industriously earned, by turning his actions into ridicule.

WHEN a considerable reward was offered to him who should write the best Epitaph on the famous John Duke of Marlborough, Dr. Evans, of Oxford, wrote as follows:

" Here lies John Duke of Marlborough  
 " Who run the French thorough and thorough;  
 " He marry'd Sarah Jennings, spinster;  
 " Dy'd at St. James's; bury'd at Westminster."

THERE is no single word that will express the class of under-written epitaphs. They seem, however, to be worded in that way as to form a parody on the trade practised by the deceased when living:

## LINCOLN CHURCH.

In Memory of David Fletcher, Smith to this Church,  
 who died Feb. 14, 1744.  
 Aged 48 years.

" My sledge and hammer lie reclin'd,  
 " My bellows too have lost their wind;  
 " My fire's extinguish'd; forge decay'd;  
 " And in the dust my vice is laid;  
 " My coal is spent; my iron gone;  
 " The last nail's driv'n — My work is done."

" Finis coronat opus."

OCK-

## OCKHAM in SURRY.

John Sprong, Carpenter,

Died November XVII.

MDCCXXXVI.

Aged LX.

" Fell'd by Death's surer batebet, here lies Sprong,

" Who many a sturdy oak has laid along ;

" Posts oft he made, yet ne'er a place could get ;

" And liv'd by railing tho' he was no wit :

" Old saws he bad, altho' no antiquarian ;

" Stiles he corrected, yet was no grammarian.

" Long liv'd he Ockham's premier architect ;

" And lasting as his fame a tomb t' erect

" In vain we seek an artist such as he,

" Whose pales and gates were for eternity.

" Here doth he rest from all life's cares and follies :

" O spare, kind Heav'n ! his fellow-lab' rer Hollis."

THE remaining species of epitaph writing may be termed the droll : such as provoke a smile unintentionally, and do not offend by studied extravagance.

## ON LORD BALMERINO.

" Here lies a baron bold : take care !

" There may be treason in a tear.

" And yet my Arthur may find room,

" Where greater folks don't always come."

## ON a FOX HUNTER.

" Here lies John Mills, who over hills

" Pursu'd the hounds with hollow ;

" The leap tho' high, from earth to skie,

" The Huntsman we must follow."

## ON a PARSON.

" Come, let us rejoice, merry Boys, at his fall,

" For, egad, bad he liv'd, he'd ha' bury'd us all."

ON Dr. Walker, who wrote a book on the English Particles.

" Here lie Walker's Particles."

N. B. This paper will be discontinued till the first week in January, when it will be resumed.